Measures to Protect Country's Wet Lands

3850. SHRI BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDE:
SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to adopt tougher measures to protect country's Wetlands;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government have any plan to mobilize resources for the same from the World Wide Fund for Nature India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) The measures taken for conservation and protection of wetlands in the country include the following:—

(i) A network of protected areas, consisting of National Parks, Sanctuaries and Biosphere Reserves and including wetlands within their boundaries, has been set up.

(ii) Under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitats (Ramsar Convention) of which India is a signatory, six wetlands have been declared as Ramsar sites. These are: Chilka Lake (Orissa), Keoladeo Ghana National Park (Rajasthan), Wular Lake (Kashmir), Harike Lake (Punjab), Loktak Lake (Manipur) and Sambhar Lake (Rajasthan).

(iii) A national Committee on Wetlands, Mangroves and Coral Reefs has been constituted to advise the Government on policy guidelines, identification of wetlands for intensive conservation, monitoring, preparation of Management Action Plans and for research activities.

(iv) A plan scheme for the conservation of wetlands has been launched to provide catalytic support to the State Governments for conservation and improvement of selected wetlands. So far, 16 wetlands have been included in the national programme and an amount of Rs. 4.7 crores has been sanctioned to the State Governments for supplementing the activities relating to survey and mapping, afforestation in the catchment areas, siltation control, weed control and creation of environmental awareness.

(v) Research studies have been commissioned through the university system and research institutions for conducting scientific studies and investigations on various aspects of wetland ecosystems.

(vi) The Botanical Survey of India, Zoological Survey of India, Wildlife Institute of India and the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History have undertaken surveys and scientific studies on wetlands in different parts of the country.

(vii) A National Lake Conservation Plan has been formulated to give particular attention to the urban water bodies which are threatened by pollution and such other human activities. The State Governments have been requested to suggest the lakes that could be included in the Plan.

(viii) Through the State statutes and Central laws, such as Wildlife (Protection) Act, Forest (Conservation) Act, Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, etc., legal measures have been taken to regulate activities that have a bearing on the wetlands ecosystems.

(ix) Criteria for selection of wetlands of national importance and guidelines for preparation of management action plan for conservation of wetlands have been issued to the State Governments.

(x) Under the programmes on environmental education and awareness, conservation of biological diversity in wetlands has been given priority; and

(xi) The Non-Government Organisations such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)—India and Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) have also taken up programmes for the conservation of wetlands.

There is no plan at present to mobilize sources for wetland protection from the World Wide Fund for Nature-India.